WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a system management controller included in a computer system, a method of accessing event data describing a failure, the method comprising:

configuring the system management controller to monitor a task of writing data to an event log, the task being executed by a Basic Input Output System (BIOS) program in response to the failure;

monitoring the task for completion;

accessing the event data if the task fails to complete.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the failure generates a system management interrupt and the BIOS program is triggered in response to the system management interrupt.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein monitoring the task comprises:

setting a configurable time of a watchdog timer, the task being configured to access the event data, and write the data to the event log in response to the event data, the task being completed within the configurable time set in the watchdog timer;

receiving an indication from the BIOS program on completion of the task.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the task fails to complete when the task fails to receive the indication from the BIOS program.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein receiving the indication from the BIOS program comprises resetting the configurable time in the watchdog timer.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the event data is stored in a memory of the computer system by a controller device included in the computer system.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the controller device is a memory controller.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the controller device is an I/O controller.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the system management controller accesses the event data over a system bus of the computer system.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the system bus is a SMbus.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising, the system management controller writing the event log in response to accessing the event data.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein writing the event log occurs over a system bus of the computer system.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the system bus is a SMbus.

14. A method of accessing event data on a failure of a computer system, the method comprising:

executing a BIOS program to access the event data in response to a first failure of the computer system;

triggering a watchdog timer in a system management controller of the computer system, the watchdog timer being triggered substantially concurrent to the first failure;

configuring the watchdog timer to allow the BIOS program to complete in absence of a second failure;

determining whether the execution of the BIOS program caused the second failure, the second failure forcing the watchdog timer to expire; and

the system management controller accessing the event data when the watchdog timer expires.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the second failure is substantially similar to the first failure.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the second failure occurs while a processor included in the computer system operates in a SMM mode.

17. A computer system comprising:
a processor;
a memory coupled to the processor;
a BIOS program stored in the memory, the BIOS program being operable to write data to an event log in response to a critical event;
a system controller coupled to the memory and the processor, the system controller operable to:
receive an indication of the critical event;
upon receipt of the indication, initiate operation of a timer; and
determine whether the BIOS program has written the data to the event log within a configurable period of time defined by the timer.

18. In a computer system having a processor and a system controller, a method of responding to an event, the method comprising:
issuing an interrupt to the processor in response to the event;
detecting the interrupt at the system controller coupled to the processor;
initiating a timer in the system controller upon detection of the interrupt;
attempting to write data to an event log by executing a BIOS program;
the system controller determining whether the execution of the BIOS program resulted in writing data to the event log.

19. The method of claim 18 further comprising:
if execution of the BIOS does not result in the writing of the data to the event log before expiration of a time period established by the timer, causing the system controller to respond to the event.